

THE MIDWEEK



WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY 9:30 AM

This Sunday, Kevin Chupp will preach a sermon titled *Head in the Crowds* using John 12:12-19 & 19:16b-22.

Continuing in Lent through the gospel of John, we arrive at the ultimate expression of dissonance: jubilant crowds followed by crowd-motivated crucifixion. What does holding the “triumphal entry” and “the passion” together tell us about our role in participating in the kingdom of God?

After Worship

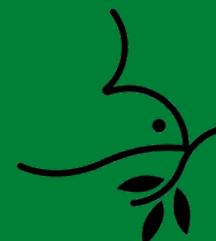
Adult CE

Rooms 5 & 7

Children & Youth CE

Pre-K-5th Grades
Junior High
High School

The service will be live streamed on YouTube at this [link](#).
The bulletins get posted under the Worship tab of our [website](#).



**Mennonite
Church
of Normal**

A congregation of
Mennonite Church USA



No Kings Rally

This Saturday, March 28 at noon

There will be a No Kings rally in Bloomington in front of the Bloomington Center for the Performing Arts (BPCA) from Noon to 1:00 PM on Saturday, March 28th to peacefully demonstrate opposition to US administration policies and the US war with Iran. **Together, we're going to make March 28 the largest day of protest in American history — and then we're going to keep showing up to defend our neighbors and our democracy.**

In Peace, Phil, Chair of Outreach Commission

A Note from Mark & Jane



Thank you for praying for us and our family as Mark has undergone his surgery and we await follow-up testing and prognosis. We especially appreciated the Zoom prayer time the evening before surgery. Seeing the Zoom squares with so many precious people was such a comfort and support to us. Your prayers and accompaniment during this uncertain time mean so much. Thank you.

From Mark and Jane



Camp Friedenswald Winter Retreat

We have a nearly 50 year tradition of a winter retreat at Camp Friedenswald in southern Michigan. There were times we filled two lodges, slid down the slopes, hiked the woods, played games and prepared meals together. Treasured memories. Over the years, attendance has declined significantly. Costs have gone up. Our current arrangement is not sustainable and we have chosen to not reserve Lakeview Lodge for January 2027. We do not take this lightly. This does not end our relationship with the camp, just not a retreat that weekend in that Lodge. We have connections to the camp beyond the retreat weekend. We do not see those diminishing and we want to continue involvement with the camp, finding new ways to engage. Might we have work days there? A summer retreat? Use a different lodge? Volunteer? We welcome your ideas! Camp Friedenswald is a beautiful and thriving place, stewarded by dedicated folks caring for this piece of the earth. In their ministry, they share it with us. May we continue to share our lives and support with them.

From the Community Life Commission: Marge (Chair), Connie, Jill, and Kevin Chupp (Pastor)

Il Mennonite Relief Sale



This year's sale generated approximately \$140,000 in gross revenue, reflecting another strong and meaningful weekend of support for the work of Mennonite Central Committee and our local partners. While this total is slightly lower than last year, we are deeply grateful for the generosity, participation, and spirit of everyone involved. More detailed financial results, including final net proceeds, will be shared in the coming weeks. Thank you for all the ways you help make the Relief Sale possible - from promotion to participation to prayer.

The newest edition of Central District Conference's monthly Connector publication is now available to read [here](#). In this issue of the Connector we reflect on partnerships near and far, including a respite housing apartment in Cincinnati and a bi-national companion congregation relationship. We also hear from Conference Minister Amy Zimbelman of Mountain States Conference. **If you would like a paper copy, they are now available to take from the Library Table.**



Bite-sized pieces of our shared history leading up to our 50th anniversary celebration (September 27, 2026).

Speaking again of our companions at [Hope Mennonite Church](#) in Winnipeg, we might imagine that Manitoba as a very different place. They are, after all across an international border and much more of a “Northern” community. However, we are both part of the historical tallgrass prairie ecosystem. According to the National Park Service, beginning 8,000-10,000 years ago, this was “one of the most complicated and diverse ecosystems in the world, surpassed only by the rainforest of Brazil.” These ecosystems have changed dramatically due to environmental and human factors over the last 1,000 years leaving only 4% of that unique ecosystem of towering grasses and even more immense roots. *Do you have a factoid to share? Send it to: kevin@normalmennonite.org*



Birthdays & Anniversaries

CELEBRATING LIFE'S MOMENTS AT MCN



Prayer Requests and Announcements

Prayer requests can be shared during the Sharing Joys and Concerns portion of our Worship Service. For other announcements, please send them to Lauren Satchwell (lauren@normalmennonite.org) ahead of time so that these can be shared by the worship leader during the Community Life portion of the service. When sharing, it's helpful if your requests are succinct.



Sharing of Joys and Concerns



MCN IS ASKED TO BE IN CONTINUED PRAYER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AT CARLE BROMENN MEDICAL CENTER—OUR PARTNER IN HEALING FOR 2026

This Week at MCN



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE CHURCH CALENDAR:

Wednesday, March 25

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Thursday, March 26

7:00 am Next Man Bible Study

Saturday, March 28

Noon NO KINGS Bloomington-Normal on the BCPA Lawn

Sunday, March 29

7:00 pm Adult Choir

Tuesday, March 31

3:00 pm Pastoral Team (Zoom)

Wednesday, April 1

9:30 am Wednesday Morning Book Group

1:00 pm Quilting



Those Serving This Week



MWC assembly shifts to Tanzania

Mennonite World Conference's 2028 global assembly will be in Tanzania. The Executive Committee announced March 19 it had accepted an invitation from the member churches of that country. The five-day gathering of Anabaptists from around the world will take place in the first two weeks of June. The theme is being finalized. The new assembly venue had to be selected with only a two-year lead time after the intended host, the Meserete Kristos Church in Ethiopia, withdrew its invitation. "Together building the body of Christ and strengthening global fellowship" is the vision for hosting the global Anabaptist church," said Bishop Nelson Kisare of *Kanisa la Mennonite Tanzania* (Tanzania Mennonite Church, or KMT). **Read the rest of the *Anabaptist World* article [here](#).**

John McCutcheon
Concert to Benefit
Anabaptist Disabilities Network



Friday May 1st at 7 pm
Waterford Mennonite Church
65975 SR 15, Goshen, IN
All tickets \$25
<https://bit.ly/ADNticket>
 ASL interpretation provided 

Mennonite Action Mass Call Re-Cap

Thank you to all who joined us for our Mennonite Action March Mass Call last week! We heard stories from a recent delegation to Palestine, organized by Mennonite Men and joined by many in the Mennonite Action community. You can watch the [recording of the call here](#), and find the [call companion with a host of links here](#). After updates from Palestine, we learned about a LOT of great opportunities to get plugged into:

- Be sure you check out our [No Kings Day Toolkit](#) and join a local event on March 28th
- Consider joining for advocacy days in D.C. with [Ecumenical Advocacy Days](#) or [UNRWA USA](#)
- Ask your church to take part in a Mennonite Action [giving pledge day on April 19th](#)
- Make [any donation](#) to Mennonite Action in April and be entered into a raffle to win artwork from Dorrin Gingrich!

From Mennonite Action

Life during wartime in the West Bank: an update from the US-Israel war with Iran

Two weeks into the US-Israel war with Iran, CPT Palestine gives an update on how it has impacted conditions in the West Bank.

The war between the American, Israeli, and Iranian governments has affected Palestinian lives. Missiles do not distinguish between Israelis and Palestinians. Rockets fall even in the West Bank, threatening Palestinian lives. Israel and the USA have killed more than 1,332 people from Iran and 486 from Lebanon, most of them civilians. **Read CPT Palestine's blog post published by Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**

March E-Memo: Policy Updates

- **U.S. rolls back important climate policy:** On Feb. 12, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [overturned its 2009 ruling](#) that greenhouse gas emissions endanger public health and the environment. This enabled the EPA to repeal its vehicle and power plant emission standards, an important policy for reducing U.S. emissions. Greenhouse gas emissions from extracting and burning fossil fuels drive global climate change, harming people and exacerbating conflict.
- **U.S. humanitarian funding:** On February 23, the U.S. government ended lifesaving humanitarian aid for seven African nations on the grounds of “national interest.” The countries are Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Somalia and Zimbabwe. Each had previously been determined to be in dire humanitarian need by the Trump administration. As a direct result of dramatic cuts in U.S. foreign assistance, global humanitarian crises are rising. Take action: [Urge Congress to protect lifesaving humanitarian assistance](#).
- **Oak Flat update:** On March 13, the Trump administration transferred the Apache sacred land of Oak Flat to Resolution Copper after a court declined to block the move. The proposed mine would obliterate Oak Flat, pump 250 billion gallons of water from the Arizona desert, and create 1.4 billion tons of toxic waste. Stay tuned for ways you can support through prayer and advocacy.
- **Is Cuba next?** Across Cuba, many people are struggling to meet basic needs. Reduced fuel supplies following U.S. intervention in Venezuela have had immediate consequences, contributing to blackouts, reduced mobility, and disruptions to essential services. Recently, President Trump has made [ominous threats](#) toward Cuba. [Faith-based organizations](#) are expressing deep concern about the suffering of the people of Cuba.

Shared by Mennonite Central Committee MCC U.S. National Peace & Justice Ministries in the [March E-memo](#)

What can we accomplish in 100 years?

Given the violence we have witnessed in Venezuela and Minneapolis, I have been reflecting on peacemaking. While I am committed to peacemaking as a matter of faith, at times I feel overwhelmed by violent forces. What does it mean to be a peacemaker when national leaders use violence as a primary means to solve problems? My role within the Coalition to Dismantle the Doctrine of Discovery frames my perspective on peacemaking because I interact with vulnerable people daily. People I know and love are targets of violence. I have close friends in both Venezuela and in Minneapolis. In the coalition, dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery is not a metaphor. This body of law and policy adopted by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1823 frames reality for Indigenous people. It frames the violent policy that harmed and displaced our ancestors from our traditional lands and that continues to harm and displace us today. We believe we can work to replace the Doctrine of Discovery with equitable policy, but we know this will take time. That is why we are working over generations. We believe we can dismantle it in the span of 100 years. Those of us working for justice now are creating momentum for the ones who will come after us to continue this work for justice and peace. **Read the rest of Sarah Augustine’s article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Kids' fun day in Gaza supports mental health with art and games

An MCC partner provides mental health support to displaced children in Gaza with creativity and expression at the centre.

Moments of joy are rare for kids in a warzone like Gaza. But for a group of young children in a displacement camp, a day of face painting, music, drawing and other activities brought laughter and fun where it's been sorely missed. The event, one of 15 held across six shelters for displaced Palestinians across Gaza, is the work of MCC partner Al-Najd Developmental Forum. UNICEF reports that every single child in Gaza urgently needs some form of mental health support, and Al-Najd believes a day of art, expression and fun is part of that support. They've already seen it work for kids like Sara*. Sara is 10, and she's never known a life in Gaza free of danger. In young children, that trauma often shows up as heightened anxiety, reduced play and social withdrawal, which is what Sara's mother* saw happening to her daughter. "Sara barely spoke and stayed by my side all day," says her mother. With no access to school or safe places to play, Sara spent most of her time indoors in overcrowded conditions, where stress and uncertainty were constant. The weight of all the stress she felt had made her withdrawn and anxious. But the Sara that her mother knew started to reemerge at one of Al-Najd's events in Deir al-Balah. When the activities began, and other kids were getting hearts or watermelon slices painted on their cheeks, Sara watched from a distance, clinging to her mother. Seeing Sara's hesitation, a trained facilitator offered her something to draw with from one of the activity kits. While music played on in the background, mixing with the laughter of fun and games, the act of expressing herself through art began to soften Sara's demeanor. **Read the rest of Renata Buhler's blog post for Mennonite Central Committee [here](#).**

Attacks on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq continue as civilian harm increases

Over the past week, the number of attacks on the Kurdistan Region of Iraq has decreased, while the number of casualties has increased. Between 7 March and 15 March, the IRGC and its affiliated groups carried out 111 drone attacks and bombardments against the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. Four people were killed and 32 others were injured. **Read CPT Iraqi Kurdistan's blog post for Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**

Ramadan is a space for spiritual gathering in the Old City of Al-Khalil

Ramadan transforms Hebron's Old City into a space of prayer, commerce and quiet resilience, where faith endures despite restrictions.

Ramadan in Hebron, or Al-Khalil as Palestinians call it, is a season of the soul, a time when the Old City becomes more alive and more spiritual than any other time of the year. For Muslims, this month is full of mercy, forgiveness, and blessings. In Hebron, this is felt deeply in the streets of the old city and inside the hearts of the people. **Read CPT Palestine's reflection published by Community Peacemaker Teams [here](#).**

Latin America: Uplifting Indigenous and women leaders

Watch a video and read more from Mennonite Mission Network [here](#).

Epic Fury's prevailing arrogance

Powerful nations, time and again, fall for the allure of quick wars.

When the president who promised to end wars started one, atrocity followed swiftly. The U.S. and Israel had scarcely begun their assault on Iran when a Tomahawk missile struck a girls' elementary school in the city of Minab, killing at least 175 people, most of them children. All evidence indicated it was a U.S. missile. The architects of this war call it "Epic Fury." Those with a right to be angry are the parents and grandparents of the dead children. As the war's toll rises, outrage and grief multiply, all the more so because none of this had to happen. Neither international law nor religious just-war theory supports aggression when there's no imminent threat. Seizing an opportunity to crush a weakened adversary doesn't measure up to any ethical code. As usual, predictions of an easy win proved wrong. Powerful nations, time and again, fall for the allure of quick wars. In 1914, the European armies that fired the guns of August expected to be home by Christmas. In the 2000s, failed attempts at nation-building in Iraq and Afghanistan turned Americans against "forever wars." President Trump promised not to repeat his predecessors' mistakes but succumbed to the usual illusion. Anabaptists, who espouse nonviolence because Jesus taught and lived it, are making common cause with diverse people of faith to denounce the war. Pacifist and nonpacifist Christians alike are raising voices of protest and lament against the Iran war specifically and state-led violence generally. **Read the rest of Paul Schrag's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Draft letters, not soldiers

My 18-year-old son mailed a letter to our church in February. It's a quaint act from a bygone time, writing a letter. So much so, I had to show him where to place the return address. The letter is short and to the point. It says he has a "firm, fixed and sincere objection to participation in war in any form or the bearing of arms." That's the Pentagon's definition of conscientious objection. The letter also notes his openness to alternative service. He wrote the letter because the Selective Service System has no means to indicate CO status when registering for the draft, which takes probably 30 seconds online. One can also use the paper form from the post office and write opposition in the margins to create a paper trail. It can't hurt but doesn't really help. Soon, that method of protest may not be an option. By this time next year, draft registration [is supposed to happen automatically](#) based on a new law's unfunded mandate. But until that new process takes complicity out of young men's hands, my son had to register. So he wrote a letter. A few weeks later, the U.S. and Israel launched strikes Feb. 28 against Iran. For Mennonite young men of previous generations, the prospect of facing a draft board meant learning to articulate their beliefs about killing other humans for their country. Since the draft ended in 1972, peace churches have rested easy. Perhaps too easy. Today, Anabaptist voluntary service programs draw a tiny fraction of their draft-era numbers. If there was a golden age of Anabaptist alternative service, it tracked with World War II, Korea and Vietnam. But were young people in those days really more service-minded than today's youth? Without an obligation to do alternative service, how many would have volunteered or stayed connected to churches? **Read the rest of Tim Huber's article published by the *Anabaptist World* [here](#).**

Christ of the Wheelchair

"Our God is a God who makes friends!" sings Anabaptist musician Bryan Moyer Suderman. I think this means that God meets us in so many ways. The ways must be as numerous as the people of God! For example, we might learn to know God through scripture or creation or art or silence, just to name a few. Of course, Christ's incarnation is the ultimate example of how God comes to meet us. Truly, "God is love" (1 John 4:8). I am a pastor to people with intellectual disabilities at Pleasant View in Harrisonburg, Virginia. It is my joy to encounter God among them every day. But at an earlier time in my life, I struggled, saying, "God, how will I find you?" My answer came from one of Jesus' parables in Matthew's gospel: "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me" (25:35). It seemed to me that perhaps in extending hospitality, I might meet God. As I journeyed from a previous job in Illinois, first to Pennsylvania and eventually to Virginia, I tried to learn about welcoming the stranger. Along the way, one friend suggested that I reach out to Pleasant View. "My friends with intellectual disabilities are good at extending hospitality," she said. "You could learn something from them." So, for the last ten years, I have received and learned hospitality in this community. Along the way, I was invited to become their pastor. I'm reminded of the beautiful invitation given to Henri Nouwen who, having become weary of the life of an academic, was contacted by a L'Arche community (where people with and without disabilities live life together). "Come waste some time with us," they said. "We have something to offer you, and we have something to receive from you. **Read the rest of Derek Yoder's blog post for the Anabaptist Disabilities Network [here](#).**



Our Members in Care Facilities

PLEASE REMEMBER THESE MEMBERS IN YOUR PRAYERS.
SEND A CARD IF THE SPIRIT LEADS YOU!



Commissions and Teams Contact List

Staff Contact and Building Open Hours

Building Open:

Standard Hours:

Monday-Friday 9AM-11AM & 1:30PM-3PM

Pastor Kevin designated office hours: Wednesdays, 8am-12pm
(or call to plan a visit)

Lydia Hedberg:

Office Administrator; church@normalmennonite.org; 309-452-6622

Rita Munkakusi:

Custodian

Kevin Chupp:

Pastor for Community Life Commission, Outreach Commission,
Spiritual Gifts Discernment Team, & Worship Commission;
kevin@normalmennonite.org

Lauren Satchwell:

Pastoral Team Lead & Pastor for Administration Commission,
Discipling Commission, & Vision Team;
lauren@normalmennonite.org

Items for the Midweek



Please send items to be included in the Midweek to the [Church Office](#) no later than **8am on Wednesday**. Thank you!

Commission, Team, & Committee Members

Past Midweeks

Work Order & Purchase Request Forms

Facility Use Agreement

Item Check-Out Request Form

Commission Meeting Minutes

Structure Documents
